

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 IO-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 OMB-01 AID-05 EB-07 IGA-02

/073 W

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O R 122150Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8157

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

USMISSION USUN NY

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 1 OF 3 COTONOU 0273

ABIDJAN PASS REDSO: NIAMEY PASS RDO

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, DM, US

SUBJ: SUBSTANTIVE REPORT ON BENIN "PEOPLE'S COURT" GRILLING
OF AMBASSADOR

REF A - COTONOU 256, B - COTONOU 253, C - STATE 34136,

1. SUMMARY: THIS MESSAGE SUMMARIZES SUBSTANTIVE ASPECTS OF PROCEEDINGS OF "COMMISSION OF INQUIRY" (KANGAROO "PEOPLE'S COURT") TO WHICH AMB WAS SUBJECTED AT PRESIDENCY YESTERDAY AFTERNOON FEB 12. BRIEF SUMMARY, TOGETHER WITH COMMENTARY, WAS PROVIDED IN REF A. END SUMMARY

2. AS THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY SAT DOWN I ENDEAVORED TO MAKE SOME ORAL COMMENTS (SEE REF C, PARAS ONE THROUGH THREE) TO SUPPLEMENT AIDE MEMORIE WHICH WAS ON TABLE. EARLIER IN THE DAY KEREKOU HAD GIVEN ME NO OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE AN ORAL PRESENTATION (REF B). ALLADAYE ASKED ME TO BE QUIET. HE WAS IN CHARGE, AND WOULD CALL ON ME IF MY VIEWS WERE NEEDED.

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3. HE FIRST ASKED THE TWO "INQUISITORS" TO QUESTION ME. (BY THE WAY I AM CERTAIN ONE OF THEM, THE NASTIEST PERSON PRESENT, WAS THE COMMUNIST PREFECT OF THE BORGOU REGION, IGNACE ADJO- BOKO, WHOM I HAD MET BEFORE. WE SUSPECT THE OTHER WAS ANOTHER CIVILIAN MEMBER OF POLITBURO.) INQUISITORS, SIMULATING ROLE OF PUBLIC PROSECUTORS, BEGAN BY ASKING ME WHAT AN AIDE-MEMOIRE WAS, WHY I HAD GIVEN IT TO PRESIDENT, WHY I THOUGHT IT WAS AUTHENTIC, WHO HAD WRITTEN IT IN DEPT OF STATE, WHO COULD BE HELD RESPONSIBLE IN WASHINGTON FOR DECISION TO SUSPEND ACTIVITY ON COTONOU BRIDGE, WHY SOME FORM OTHER THAN AIDE-MRMOIRE WAS NOT USED ETC.

4. TAKING TURNS, INQUISITORS THEN WENT THROUGH AIDE-MEMOIRE, SENTENCE BY SENTENCE, TRYING TO GET ME TO ELABORATE AND INTERPRET EACH ONE. THEY USED TECHNIQUE OF "CROSS EXAMINATION", THE SECOND ONE POINTING OUT ALLEGED INCONSISTENCIES IN WHAT I SAID AS WELL AS INCONSISTENCIES BETWEEN WHAT I SAID AT THAT MOMENT AND WHAT FORNMIN ALLEGED I HAD SAID TO HIM ON VARIOUS EARLIER OCCASIONS.

5. WHEN THEY REACHED PARA (D), CAKPO (DIR OF WEST EUROPE/ NORTH AMERICA DIVISION OF FOREIGN MINISTRY,) WAS ASKED BY MINISTER TO PROVIDE A BRIEFING ON THE TALKS AND COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THE EMBASSY AND THE THREE MINISTRIES CONCERNED. OBJECT WAS TO "PROVE" THAT I HAD FAILED TO REPORT "PROGRESS" OF INDEMNIFICATION. ODDLY ENOUGH CAKPO, WHO WAS TERRIFIED, BASED HIS PRESENTATION ON AN ALLEGED CONVERSATION HE HAD WITH OUR DCM SOMETIME LAST JULY, A CONVERSATION I COULD NOT RECALL (NOR DOES DCM), AND ABOUT WHICH WE HAVE NO RECORD. HE SAID HE HAD GIVEN DCM "FULL ASSURANCES" THAT BENIN WOULD PAY. THOSE OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN ENOUGH. CAKPO ALSO MENTIONED EMBASSY'S NOTE OF NOV 24 EXPLAINING OUR NEED FOR INFORMATION ON INDEMNIFICATION PROGRESS IN CONNECTION WITH GSP, AND NOTING HICKENLOOPER AND GONZALES AMENDMENT IMPLICATIONS. SINCE CAKPO, EVEN WITH HIS FILES, COULD NOT PROVIDE A PROPER HISTORY OF EMBASSY TALKS AND COMMUNICATIONS WITH MINISTRIES, I FILLED IN SPECIFIC DETAILS, BEGINNING WITH DEC 74, IN ORDER TO ENSURE BALANCED PICTURE AND TO DEMONSTRATE EMBASSY'S COMMAND OF DETAILS.

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6. I WAS THEN GRILLED RE MY ATTITUDE TOWARD BENIN GOVT. DID I CONSIDER MYSELF TRULY A FRIEND OF THE GOVT? WHY DID I DOUBT BENIN'S PROMISE, SOLEMNLY GIVEN IN DEC 74 AND OFTEN REPEATED, THAT BENIN WOULD INDEMNIFY? I POINTED OUT THAT I ALWAYS ACCEPTED BENIN'S WORD OF COURSE, BUT THE AMERICAN LEGISLATION PROVIDED THAT CONCRETE FORWARD PROGRESS HAD TO BE MADE. PROMISES, WHILE IMPORTANT, WERE NOT ENOUGH. INQUISITORS TRIED TO WORK ME OVER IN VARIOUS WAYS ON THIS

SUBJECT, HOPING TO FIND PRETEXT TO SUPPORT THEIR THESIS THAT I DISLIKED AND DISTRUSTED BENIN GOVT. THEY THEN WANTED TO KNOW WHETHER I REGARDED THE FOREIGN MINISTER AS A FRIEND OR AS A MINISTER. I SAID BOTH OF COURSE.

7. INQUISITORS DECLARED IT WAS CLEAR FROM THE AIDE-MEMOIRE THAT I HAD NOT BEEN REPORTING BENIN GOVT ACTIONS RE INDEMNIFICATION ACCURATELY. THE DOCUMENT FAILED TO RECOGNIZE THAT THE MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, FINANCE AND INDUSTRY HAD FREQUENTLY PROVIDED DETAILS TO ME REGARDING "PROGRESS" TOWARD INDEMNIFICATION. I ASKED "WHAT DETAILS? IF YOUR GOVT PROVIDES NONE I CANNOT REPORT THEM". THEY ARGUED THAT I HAD BEEN GIVEN ASSURANCES OF THE BENIN GOVT'S INTENTION TO PAY COMPENSATION, AND I HAD BEEN TOLD THAT "A COMMISSION" HAD BEEN SET UP TO DEAL WITH THE MATTER. I RESPONDED THAT I HAD REPORTED EVERY SCRAP OF INFO WE HAD BEEN ABLE TO OBTAIN. THE SUM TOTAL WAS NOT VERY MUCH, BECAUSE WE COULD NEVER GET ANY PARTICULARS, THOUGH THEY WERE PROMISED. THE ONLY TWO FACTS WE COULD ESTABLISH WERE THAT (A) ASSURANCES OF INTENTION TO PAY WERE FREQUENTLY GIVEN, AND (B) TWO COMMISSIONS, NOT ONE, HAD BEEN CREATED. (ONE FOR BANKS AND ONE FOR OIL COMPANIES). HOWEVER WE COULD NEVER DETERMINE WHO WERE ON THE COMMISSIONS OR WHAT THEY HAD ACHIEVED, THOUGH WE HAD FREQUENTLY SOUGHT SUCH INFO AND HAD BEEN PROMISED THAT IT WOULD BE FORTHCOMING. THE FIRST ACTUAL SIGNAL THAT A STEP FORWARD MIGHT BE TAKEN WAS WHEN THE FOREIGN MINISTER INFORMED ME ON JAN 16 THAT THE FINANCE MINISTER WOULD WRITE TO MOBIL AND TEXACO SAYING THAT THE BENIN GOVT WOULD BE PREPARED TO BEGIN NEGOTIATING ON FEB 20.

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 IO-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

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O R 122150Z FEB 76
FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8158
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
USMISSION USUN NY

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ABIDJAN PASS REDSO: NIAMEY PASS RDO

8. AT THIS POINT ADJO-BOKO JUMPED IN TO CHARGE THAT THE LAST SENTENCE OF PART (D) OF AIDE MEMOIRE IGNORED FOREIGN MINISTER'S ASSURANCES OF JAN 16 AND OTHER EVIDENCE THE RECENT STEPS TAKEN BY THE BENIN GOVT TO BEGIN NEGOTIATIONS. WHAT THE NOTE SAID WAS UNFAIR. AFTER COMMENTING THAT THE SENTENCE IN QUESTION SAID NO "FORMAL REPLY" HAD BEEN RECEIVED BY EMBASSY, I SAID THAT AFTER MY MEETING WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER ON JAN 16, I CABLED THE SUBSTANCE OF THE CONVERSATION IMMEDIATELY TO WASHINGTON INCLUDING THE MINISTER'S ASSURANCE THAT HE WOULD SEND ME A NOTE IN ANOTHER DAY OR SO CONFIRMING HIS GOVT'S ACTIONS TOWARD INDEMNIFICATION. THE NOTE (THE GOVT'S "FORMAL" COMMUNICATION) DID NOT ARRIVE AT THE EMBASSY UNTIL THE EVENING OF FEB 11, AND I SAW IT ON THE MORNING OF FEB 12, JUST BEFORE I WAS CONVOKED BY THE PRESIDENT. I IMMEDIATELY CABLED TO WASHINGTON THE FULL TEXT OF THE NOTE AS WELL AS THE TEXT OF FINANCE MINISTER'S LETTERS OF JAN 27 TO MOBIL AND TEXACO. WHEN I SENT THE CABLE, THE DEPT'S AIDE-MEMOIRE WAS ALREADY IN MY HANDS AND MY INSTRUCTIONS INDICATED THAT IT WAS PLANNED TO GIVE A COPY TO BENIN'S AMB
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IN WASHINGTON THE PREVIOUS DAY. I HAD THEREFORE DELIVERED THE AIDE-MEMOIRE TEXT AS RECEIVED, AND WAS PREPARED TO ACKNOWLEDGE ORALLY THAT THE BENIN GOVT'S NOTE HAD BEEN RECEIVED.

9. THE INQUISITORS THEN POINTED OUT THAT THE MINISTRY'S NOTE ON INDEMNIFICATION WAS DATED FEB 6. WHY HAD I NOT READ IT AND ACTED UPON IT MORE PROMPTLY? I REITERATED THAT IT WAS RECEIVED AT OUR CHANCERY THE EVENING OF FEB 11. THEY URGED A FULL INVESTIGATION OF THE TRANSMISSION OF THE NOTE, TO DETERMINE WHETHER I WAS LYING. LIKE HORNETS THEY BORED ON ME RE THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S PROCEDURES FOR PROCESSING AND DELIVERING NOTES. I TOOK FIRM POSITION THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER SHOULD PROVIDE THE ANSWERS TO THOSE QUESTIONS.

10. THEN I WAS ASKED WHETHER I CONSIDERED FOREIGN MINISTRY'S NOTE AND FINANCE MINISTER'S LETTERS TO OIL COMPANIES TO BE "CONCRETE STEPS" FORWARD. I SAID I CERTAINLY DID. THEY WERE RECEIVED AT EMBASSY WITH "ACCLAMATION" (WHEREUPON TWO PERSONS

PRESENT ACTUALLY SMILED), FOR THEY WERE THE FIRST CONCRETE STEPS WE HAD BEEN ABLE TO REPORT SINCE DEC 74. WHAT WOULD "THE COMMISSION" IN WASHINGTON DO ABOUT THE NEWS CONTAINED IN

THOSE DOCUMENTS? I SAID I WAS CERTAIN THEY WOULD BE IMPRESSED, AND THEY WOULD ALSO BE VERY KEEN TO FOLLOW THE COURSE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. I SAID WE KNEW THAT THE BENIN GOVT COULD NEGOTIATE EFFICIENTLY AND RAPIDLY, IF IT SO DECIDED, AND I CITED THE CASE OF THE SDB BANK LAST SPRING. INQUISITORS SEEMED SATISFIED TO HEAR THIS REMARK, WITH WHICH THEY AGREED.

11. RE PARA (E), THE INQUISITORS CHARGED THAT IT WAS VERY UNFAIR THAT FUNDS BEING MADE AVAILABLE FOR CONSULTING ENGINEER'S SERVICES ON DAM AND OLD BRIDGE WERE STILL SUBJECT TO SUSPENSION. I INDICATED THAT AMERICAN LAW GOVERNED THIS MATTER. ALSO THAT THIS PARTICULAR MONEY WAS MADE AVAILABLE PURSUANT TO MY RECOMMENDATION FOLLOWING MY TALK WITH FOREIGN MIN FEB 4.

12. INQUISITORS AND FORNMIN THEN JUMPED ON ME TO EXPLAIN WHY AIDE MEMOIRE DID NOT RESPOND SPECIFICALLY TO FOREIGN MINISTRY'S NOTE TO ME OF FEB 9 DEMANDING THAT I CONFIRM IN WRITING STATEMENTTSI ALLEGEDLY MADE TO FORNMIN PREVIOUS DAY. THEY REVIEWED EACH OF THE WORDS IN HIS NOTE (COTONOU 197)

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TRYING TO GET ME TO ADMIT THAT I HAD SAID EACH WORD AND INSINUATING THAT I WAS A LIAR. I REPEATED WHAT I HAD SAID TO MINISTER FEB 4 REGARDING HIS ALLEGATIONS THAT BENIN WAS ON A PUNITIVE LIST AND I ADDED THAT, AS SEC KISSINGER HAD TOLD THE AFRICAN AMBASSADORS IN WASHINGTON ON JAN 15, THERE WAS NO LIST OF COUNTRIES AGAINST WHOM SANCTIONS WERE BEING TAKEN DUE TO THEIR VOTES IN UNGA. NOR WAS THERE ANY LIST OF COUNTRIES REGARDING WHICH THE US INTENDS RE-EXAMINE AID POLICIES. US POLICY HAD NOT CHANGED, BUT USG WOULD CONTINUE AS IN PAST TO TAKE NOTE OF ACTIONS AND STATEMENTS OF OTHER COUNTRIES THAT AFFECT MAJOR US INTERESTS. AND THESE ACTIONS AND STATEMENTS WOULD INFLUENCE OUR OVERALL BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH EACH COUNTRY CONCERNED, MINISTERS, INQUISTORS AND I FOUGHT

A LONG BATTLE OVER THIS GROUND. I SAID THAT AT ANY GIVEN MOMENT, EVERY COUNTRY WAS IN THE PROCESS OF EVALUATING ITS RELATIONS WITH SOME OTHER COUNTRY IN THE LIGHT OF ALL FACTORS. FOR EXAMPLE, BENIN WAS DOING THAT YESTERDAY WITH USA. THEY PROFESSED NOT TO UNDERSTAND THE POINT. FORNMIN SAID HE BELIEVED I WAS TRYING TO PLAY GAMES WITH THEM. I WENT THROUGH THE ARGUMENT ALL AGAIN, THEN EXPLAINED HOW DEPT'S NEW OFFICE OF MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS WORKED. BEFORE INQUISTORS MOVED ON TO ANOTHER POINT, BOTH THEY AND MINISTER DECLARED THAT MY RESPONSE TO CHARGES THAT THERE WAS "A LIST" WAS UNSATISFACTORY AND MY FAILURE TO CONFIRM IN WRITING THE

MINISTER'S VERSION OF WHAT I SAID TO HIM FEB 4 CONFIRMED
MY UNCOOPERATIVENESS WITH GOVT OF BENIN.

13. FORNMIN REITERATED HIS THEME OF FEB 4 THAT USG SOUGHT TO
USE BENINESE PRESS CRITICISM OF US AS PRETEXT FOR REDUCING
AID. IN A CHORUS MINISTER AND INQUISITORS CRIED OUT THAT BENIN
INTENDED TO CONTINUE TO "TELL THE TRUTH" ABOUT AMERICA. I
SAID USG TOOK INTO ACCOUNT EVERYTHING A COUNTRY SAID AND DID
VIS-A-VIS THE US WHEN WE WERE CONSIDERING THE STATE OF OUR
BILATERAL RELATIONS. FORNMIN NEXT CLAIMED THAT IN AN EARLIER
CONVERSATION I HAD TIED AID TOGETHER WITH PRESS ATTACKS. THE
INQUISITORS THEN TRIED TO WORK ME OVER, SEEKING ADMISSION OF
INCONSISTENCY OR LYING. I REMINDED FORNMIN THAT I HAD RE-
PORTED TO HIM ON MY RETURN FROM US LAST FALL, AND ALSO TO
PRES KEREKOU ON OCT 17, THAT THE AMERICAN PUBLIC WAS EXASPER-
ATED BY ABUSIVE CRITICISM OF UNITED STATES, UNJUST ACCUSATIONS
AND ATTACKS AGAINST VITAL USG INTERESTS. PUBLIC OPINION WAS
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BEGINNING TO ASK WHY USG WAS GIVING AID TO SUCH COUNTRIES.
PUBLIC OPINION, WHICH IS SOVEREIGN IN US., EXERCISED PRESS RE
ON USG . HERE THE INQUISITORS DECLARED THAT USG OUGHT
TO WAKE UP AND SUPPORT AFRICAN GOVTs LIKE THAT OF BENIN,
WHICH RESTED ON POPULAR WILL, INSTEAD OF BACKING REACTIONARY
REGIMES.

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 IO-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

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O R 122150Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8159
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
USMISSION USUN NY

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ABIDJAN PASS REDSO: NIAMEY PASS RDO

14. IN ORDER TO SOW SEEDS AGAINST FASHIONABLE CURRENT THINKING HERE THAT KICKING OUT AMERICAM AMBASSADOR WILL RESULT IN MORE AMERICAN AID, I TOOK ADVANTAGE OF A CHANCE OPENING TO SAY I HOPED IT WAS UNDERSTOOD BY EVERYONE THAT USA HAD NO SUBSTANTIVE INTERESTS AT ALL IN BENIN, THOUGH WE DID HAVE SOME VERY SIGNIFICANT INTERESTS IN SOME OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES LIKE ZAIRE. THE BENIN GOVERNMENT HAD EXPROPRIATED ALL AMERICAN INTERESTS. THERE WAS LITTLE TRADE. BENIN HAD NOTHING WE WANTED. WE HAD NOTHING TO GAIN THERE. COUNTRY HAD NO STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE AT ALL. OUR RELATIONSHIP WAS BASED ON COMPASSION, WHICH HOWEVER WAS VERY SIGNIFICANT TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. ADJO-BOKO ASKED WHAT COMPASSION WAS, AND I DEFINED THE WORD AS SYMPATHETIC MORAL SENTIMENTS TOWARD SOMEBODY IN NEED OF HELP. HE JEERINGLY ASKED IF WE WERE SHOWING COMPASSION IN MAKING HICKENLOOPER AMENDMENT REVIEW. WHY WAS A REVIEW NECESSARY AT ALL? I RESPONDED THAT USG WAS A GOVERNMENT OF LAWS, NOT MEN. NOT ONLY THE PEOPLE BUT THE GOVERNMENT ITSELF HAD TO OBEY AMERICAN LAWS. IN USA WE ENJOYED THE RULE OF LAW.

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15. AS REPORTED REF (A), FOREIGN MINISTER, TALKING LIKE MY MORAL TUTOR, COMPARED ME UNFAVORABLY WITH MY PREDECESSOR AND CRITICIZED MY PERFORMANCE AS UNSATISFACTORY. I ASKED HIM IF HE DID NOT AGREE THAT CONDITIONS IN BENIN HAD CHANGED A GREAT DEAL SINCE MY PREDECESSOR'S DEPARTURE. ADJO-BOKO PROFESSED TO SEE IN THIS STATEMENT AN IMPLICATION THAT I CONSIDERED THAT EVERYTHING WAS THE SAME, AND THAT I WAS BERATING BENIN. I REPEATED WHAT I HAD SAID, IN DIFFERENT WORDS. FOREIGN MINISTER, WITH ECHOES OF SUPPORT FROM THE INQUISITORS, OBSERVED THAT "COOPERATION" (AID) FROM USA HAD DECLINED A GREAT DEAL SINCE MY ARRIVAL. I TOOK ISSUE AND IN COURSE OF MY REMINDING THEM OF OUR VARIOUS AID PROGRAMS, ADJO-BOKO INTERRUPTED TO SAY THAT USA WAS NOT BEING OF HELP TO BENIN. WHEN I GOT TO CATHOLIC RELIEF, HE ASSERTED THAT BENINESE PEOPLE DID NOT WANT FLOUR AND MILK BUT CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT. "WE DO NOT WANT CATHOLIC RELIEF*" I ASKED HIM IF I SHOULD REPORT THAT STATEMENT TO USG. HE ANSWERED EMPHATICALLY IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. I PROMISED HIM THAT I

WOULD.

16. FORNMIN ASKED ME TO REPEAT WHAT HE HAD SAID TO ME ON FEB 10 ABOUT MY INADEQUACIES AS AMB. WHEN I DEMURRED HE BECAME VERY INSIDENT. THE INQUISITORS CHIMED IN ABOUT THE NEED TO BE "COOPERATIVE". I PROVIDED ONE INNOCUOUS SENTENCE AND ASKED FOREIGN MIN IF HE COULD RECALL EXACTLY. HE PROFESSED TO BUT ADDED NOTHING TO THAT WHICH HE HAD SAID EARLIER. THEN HE DEMANDED THAT I REPEAT EVERYTHING HE HAD SAID TO ME ON JAN 30 AND FEB 4. I SAID I COULD NOT, THOUGH THE CONVERSATIONS WERE FULLY RECORDED IN MY REPORTS TO WASHINGTON. COULD HE? HE REPLIED THAT IT WAS NOT NECESSARY FOR HIM TO. I COMMENTED DISAPPROVINGLY THAT IT WAS IMPROPER AND UNDIGNIFIED TO CONDUCT THIS KIND OF "INQUEST" OF AN AMBASSADOR.

17. WHEN THE MEETING WAS FINALLY DRAWING TO A CLOSE, I WAS ASKED WHAT I INTENDED TO DO RE THE AIDE MEMOIRE. I REPLIED THAT THE DOCUMENT SIGNIFIED NEEDS FOR SUBSTANTIVE ACTIONS ON THE PART OF BENIN. I WOULD TRANSMIT IT TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY TODAY UNDER COVER OF A NOTE WHICH WOULD IDENTIFY IT AS HAVING BEEN SENT TO THE EMBASSY BY THE DEPT FOR PRESENTATION TO BENIN GOVT. THEY COULD ALSO COUNT ON ME TO REPORT FAITHFULLY CONFIDENTIAL

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ALL OF THE CONVERSATIONS I HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN DURING THE DAY, AS WELL AS ANY FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS RE INDEMNIFICATION (FOREGOING COMMENTS DESIGNED TO RESPOND TO CRITICISM I HAD RECEIVED EARLIER). THEN I POINTED OUT THAT BENIN GOVT WOULD WANT TO STUDY PARA (F) CLOSELY, BECAUSE ONLY THREE MONTHS WERE LEFT TO FIND FUNDS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW BRIDGE. AT FIRST THEY INSISTED THAT I SHOULD BE TAKING THE NECESSARY ACTIONS. THEY ASSERTED THAT THE BENIN GOVT HAD ALREADY DONE EVERYTHING REQUIRED FROM ITS SIDE RE THE PROJECT. ONLY THE USA HAD FAILED TO COME THROUGH. I POINTED OUT THAT THE TECHNICAL QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE BRIDGE CONSTRUCTIONS WERE APPROPRIATE FOR THEM TO TAKE UP WITH THEIR CONSULTING ENGINEER AND WITH THE BIDDER LELLO TEER. AND THE PROBLEM OF FINDING ADDITIONAL FUNDS WAS THEIRS.

18. MY REFUSAL TO SIGN WHATEVER MINUTES (PROCES-VERBAL) WERE WRITTEN AFTER OUR MEETING IS COVERED IN REF A.

19. COMMENT: REGRET THE ABOVE RAMBLING AND TIRESOME ACCOUNT OF WHAT TRANSPRIED DURING CHAOTIC KANGAROO PROCEEDING. IT IS WHAT I CAN RECALL LATE TODAY OF THE AFFAIR, AFTER HAVING DRAFTED MANY OTHER MESSAGES IN MEANTIME. I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE USEFUL HAVING A RECORD OF MY RECOLLECTIONS, IN CASE AN ISSUE SHOULD ARISE AS TO WHAT WAS SAID.

20. DURING THE COURSE OF THIS INCREDIBLE SESSION WE DISCUSSED

THE AIDE-MEMOIRE SO THOROUGHLY THAT FORNMIN AND CAKPO SURELY
MUST NOW UNDERSTAND SOME OF ITS CONTENTS.

21. FIVE PERSONS WHO FACED ME IN THE ENCOUNTER WERE FORNMIN
PREFECT ADJO-BOKO AND ONE OTHER PARTY IDEOLOGUE WHO IS PROBABLY
A CIVILIAN MEMBER OF POLITBURO, CAKPO OF FORNMINISTRY AND
A SECRETARY, WHO TOOK VERY FEW NOTES. ALL THE OTHERS HAD PAPER
AND PENCIL BUT VERY LITTLE WAS WRITTEN DOWN.

2. PRESUMABLY PRES KEREKOU INTENDED THAT HIS "VERDICT" ON ME
WOULD BE BASED ON THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY'S
FINDINGS. I SHOULD IMAGINE THAT MINUTES WILL BE VERY DISTORTED.

23. I WOULD OF COURSE HAVE BEEN PERFECTLY CORRECT IF,
IN ACCORDANCE WITH DIPLOMATIC NORMS, I HAD DECLINED TO TAKE
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PART IN THIS "PEOPLE'S COURT" OR IF I HAD WALKED OUT. IN-
TERNATIONAL DIPLOMATIC PRACTICE IS NOT HOWEVER RESPECTED
AT ALL IN THIS NEW PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC. HAD I NOT PARTICIPATED,
I WOULD SURELY HAVE BEEN PNG'D BEFORE THE END OF THE DAY.

23. FOR OTHER COMMENT, SEE REF A.
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